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No Platform for Transphobia

Anarchist Affinity

14 June 2014

Transphobia is hate speech.

We do not use the phrase 'hate speech' lightly. When we describe something as 'hate speech' we are talking about speech qualitatively different from mere bigotry, prejudice or ignorance. Hate speech is a weapon, wielded against the marginalised. Hate speech serves, constructs or reinforces systems of oppression that operate upon its targets. Hate speech is characterised by an attempt to dehumanise and delegitimise the very existence of its target, and in this sense it is ultimately eliminationist. By dehumanising its targets, hate speech encourages and supports further violence, marginalisation and oppression.

At its core, transphobia denies the legitimacy and reality of sex and gender diverse peoples' experience of gender. It is worth highlighting the extreme consequence of this denial. Trans people face extremely high levels of homelessness, poverty, physical and sexual violence, and social ostracism. Other systems of oppression, such as sexism and racism, deny the humanity, intelligence and worth of their targets. Transphobic attacks, in denying the reality of trans peoples' experience of gender, in effect deny that trans people even exist.

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Transphobia is advanced in our midst by those claiming to be radical feminists. Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminists portray trans people as gender 'imposters' and argue that they undermine feminist organising. This is often accompanied by the intentional misgendering and involuntary outing of individual trans people. Through their actions and ideas, Trans Exclusionary Radical Feminists promote discrimination, bullying and create the ideological basis for the further oppression of an already marginalised group of people

While these ideas are often put forward under the guise of feminism, they are no part of a genuinely libertatory feminist or anarchist movement. Those advocating transphobia must be confronted and rejected in the same manner we should confront and reject racists, homophobes and misogynists. We must deny those advocating hate speech any legitimacy in our midst.

Anarchist Affinity calls on all other anarchist groups and individuals to join us in rejecting transphobia by refusing to provide a platform to any person or group advancing transphobic hate speech, and by refusing to share a platform with persons perpetuating transphobia.